

Pathway to Work

New Outreach Program Helps Put N.H.'s Unemployed Back on the Job

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Julia Heinlein opened Vanish Laser Studio in Portsmouth on Jan. 3, 2014, with help from the NH Small Business Development Center (NH SBDC) as part of the state's new Pathway to Work program.

When Julia Heinlein lost her job after the Portsmouth medical practice she worked for closed in the summer of 2013, the licensed advanced registered nurse practitioner with more than six years' experience managing laser services decided it was time to work for herself.

But before opening [Vanish Laser Studio](#) in Portsmouth on Jan. 3, 2014, she spent time working with Katherine McCormick, a business counselor with the [NH Small Business Development Center \(NH SBDC\)](#) as part of the state's new [Pathway to Work](#) program.

An outreach program of the [UNH Peter T. Paul College of Business and Economics](#), the NH SBDC, which this year celebrates its 30th year serving the Granite State, has partnered with New Hampshire Employment Security to offer the Pathway to Work program allows eligible out-of-work residents to start their own businesses while continuing to receive unemployment benefits.

N.H. Employment Security identifies eligible candidates, provides orientation and accepts people into the program. NH SBDC helps screen applicants to determine if their business ideas are feasible. It then provides entrepreneurial training, business counseling and technical assistance to participants.

Since Pathway to Work was created by the state in July 2013, the NH SBDC has worked with more than 52 budding entrepreneurs who are Pathway to Work clients, some of whom like Heinlein have already launched businesses.

"Because of Pathway to Work, I was able to continue to do what I love - helping people improve their self-image with cosmetic laser services," Heinlein said. "I am thrilled to open my own studio and provide customized services. I couldn't have done it without the help of my mentor and support of this program. The SBDC reviewed my business plan; helped me forecast cash-flow projections and provides ongoing support."

The NH SBDC and UNH have a long history of assisting entrepreneurs in the Granite State. In the four years prior to the launch of Pathway to Work, NH SBDC business advising helped launch 62 new startups that created 390 new jobs and raised \$12.5 million in new capital. According to research conducted by the U.S. Small Business Administration, nationally 80 percent of SBDC-counseled businesses are still in operation, compared to 44 percent of non-assisted businesses.

Recently, Citizens Bank Foundation donated \$20,000 to the NH SBDC to support Pathway to Work.

"Citizens Bank is committed to strengthening the communities we serve, and we believe this a great way to help the unemployed not merely find work but actually begin a company of their own. We know that starting a business requires not just determination, but specific knowledge and skills. The SBDC will provide critical resources to ensure that eligible New Hampshire residents launch successful businesses that will contribute to our state's economy," said Joe Carelli, president of Citizens Bank.

To participate in Pathway to Work, an unemployed worker must be eligible to receive regular unemployment compensation, permanently laid off from his or her previous job,

identified as likely to exhaust regular unemployment compensation, and engaged full-time in establishing a business and becoming self-employed.

The range of businesses the NH SBDC is working with in the Pathway to Work program is diverse and includes solar panel sales, Internet video production, interior design, photography, a laser studio, a personal trainer, a music school, search optimization for Websites, a winery, engineering and manufacturing, mediation services, a software security service and a cross fit business.

“Through Pathway to Work, New Hampshire is retaining valuable members of our communities - folks who volunteer, participate on town committees, engage in school activities and contribute to the quality of our daily life in the state,” said Mary Collins, executive director of the NH SBDC.

“I want to thank Citizens Bank for their support in moving this critical program forward,” Collins said. “Their contribution is enabling us to expand Pathway to Work and help today’s unemployed not only get back on their feet, but create jobs for others down the road.”

The NH SBDC is an outreach program of the UNH Peter T. Paul College of Business and Economics and a partnership with the State of NH, the US SBA and the private sector.

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